

Land at Duck's Nest, Arborfield, Berkshire
Heritage Desk-Based Assessment
(revised) October 2024

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Report

Heritage Desk-Based Assessment

Site

Land at Duck's Nest, Arborfield, Berkshire

Client

David Wilson Homes (Southern) Ltd

Date

(revised) October 2024

Planning Authority

Wokingham District Council

Site Centred At

SU 76094 66338

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Report Status

Final

Orion Ref

PN2013/DBA3

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Timescales Used in This Report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 - 12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 - 4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 - 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 - 700 BC
Iron Age	700 - AD 43

Historic

Roman	43 - 410AD
Saxon/Early Medieval	410 - 1066AD
Medieval	1066 - 1485AD
Post Medieval	1486 - 1901AD
Modern	1901 - Present Day

This heritage desk-based assessment considers land at Duck's Nest, Arborfield, Berkshire (Figure 1). The site is located at grid reference SU 76094 66338. The site is hereinafter referred to as the study site.

This assessment has been commissioned by David Wilson Homes to support a planning application for a residential and SANG scheme.

The site is considered to have low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. The geophysical survey of the site failed to reveal any anomalies that could be interpreted as being of archaeological origin. Geophysical survey does not always record all archaeological features present so there is the potential for as yet unreported remains. However, should such remains be present they are considered to be of no more than local significance and are not a design or planning constraint.

Should further archaeological works be required, these can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

The study site is considered to lie beyond the setting of all designated heritage assets within the wider area except for Duck's Nest farm (grade II) and therefore have no effect on these assets. Ducks Nest Farmhouse will be separated from the proposed development by the modern buildings to the west, north-west and south-west of the farmhouse and by the former agricultural buildings to the north. There are potential views of the development to the south but hedge along the garden boundary is tall and will screen such views. The boundary of the study site will be planted which will further reduce/remove intervisibility with the development from the farmhouse. Furthermore, the provision of a SUDS basin in the area closest to the farmhouse in the south-eastern area of the site next to the existing entrance to the modern buildings off Eversley Road, will mean that the built form of the development will also be shielded by the modern buildings to the rear of the listed farmhouse. Consequently, the development will not be experienced from the listed building. This, combined with the neutral contribution to the significance of Duck's Nest Farm that the site currently has, means that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the significance of Ducks Nest Farm.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage desk-based assessment considers land at Duck's Nest, Arborfield, Berkshire (Figure 1). The site is located at grid reference SU 76094 66338. The site is hereinafter referred to as the study site.
- 1.2 This assessment has been commissioned by David Wilson Homes to support a hybrid application comprising:
- a) A full application for the change of use of land from agricultural land to provide an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), including the details of associated landscaping, planting, drainage measures, parking, walking routes and other works associated with the creation of the SANG.
 - b) An outline application with all matters reserved other than access into the site for a residential development of up to 135 dwellings, open space, internal accesses and parking, drainage measures, landscaping and all other associated works.
- 1.3 In accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk Based Assessments (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2020), the assessment draws together available information on designated and non-designated heritage assets, topographic and land-use information so as to establish the potential for non-designated archaeological heritage assets within the study site and the potential effect on the significance of nearby designated heritage assets. The assessment includes the results of a site survey, an examination of published and unpublished records and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise.
- 1.4 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the significance of heritage/archaeological assets on and close to the study site and consider the potential for hitherto undiscovered archaeological assets, thus enabling potential impacts on assets to be identified along with the need for design, civil engineering or archaeological solutions.

Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.5 The study site is bound by the A327 Everley Road to the west and south-west; Arborfield Court lies to the north-west; fields are located to the north; and Observer Way bounds the west and south-west (Figure 1).
- 1.6 The site is undulating, with a ridge which runs south-west to north-east across the northern part of the site at c. 80 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The land slopes to the north-west and south-east from the ridge down to c. 65 m AOD in the north-western and south-eastern corners of the site.
- 1.7 The site primarily comprises grass fields demarcated by hedges, with an arable field located in the north.
- 1.8 The underlying geology of most of site is clay, silt and sand of London Clay Formation, with a band of sand of Bagshot Formation running through the centre of the site. Most of the superficial geology of the site is not mapped, apart from a band of gravel, sand, silt and clay running through the centre of the site.

2.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework

Development Plan Framework

- 2.1 Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

- 2.2 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended) protects the fabric of Scheduled Monuments but does not afford statutory protection to their settings.

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.3 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out broad policies and obligations relevant to the protection of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and their settings.

- 2.4 Section 66(1) states:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 2.5 Section 69 of the Act requires local authorities to define as Conservation Areas any *areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* and Section 72 gives local authorities a general duty to pay special attention *to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* in exercising their planning functions. These duties are taken to apply only within a Conservation Area. The Act does not make specific provision regarding the setting of a Conservation Area, that is provided by the policy framework outlined in below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) & National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 2.6 Government policy in relation to the historic environment is outlined in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), entitled 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. This provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development;
- Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
- Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- Recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

- 2.7 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.
- 2.8 Paragraph 200 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.9 Paragraph 204 states that decisions regarding the removal or alteration of historic statues, plaques, memorials or monuments should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.
- 2.10 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposed development.
- 2.11 Paragraph 209 requires the decision-maker to take into account the effect on the significance of non-designated heritage assets and to take a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset(s) potentially affected.
- 2.12 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 2.13 *Archaeological Interest* is defined as a heritage asset which holds, or potentially could hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
- 2.14 *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Parks and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Areas designated under the relevant legislation.
- 2.15 *Significance* is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.16 *Setting* is defined as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.17 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In relation to the historic environment, paragraph 18a-001 states that:

“Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework’s drive to achieve sustainable development (as

defined in Paragraphs 6-10). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles'."

- 2.18 Paragraph 18a-002 makes a clear statement that any decisions relating to Listed Buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas must address the statutory considerations of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.
- 2.19 Paragraph 18a-013 outlines that the assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a heritage asset needs to take into account and be proportionate to the significance of the asset being considered, and the degree to which the proposed development enhances or detracts from the significance of the asset and the ability to appreciate the significance.
- 2.20 The NPPG outlines that although the extent and importance of setting is often expressed in visual terms, it can also be influenced by other factors such as noise, dust and vibration. Historic relationships between places can also be an important factor stressing ties between places that may have limited or no intervisibility with each other. This may be historic as well as aesthetic connections that contribute or enhance the significance of one or more of the heritage assets.
- 2.21 Paragraph 18a-013 concludes:
- The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance. When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its on-going conservation.*
- 2.22 The key test in NPPF paragraphs 207-208 is whether a proposed development will result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm. However, substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a-017 of the NPPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. It states:
- What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.*
- 2.23 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be

weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposed development. Paragraph 18a-020 of the NPPG outlines what is meant by public benefits:

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

2.24 Paragraph 209 states:

the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.25 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

Local Planning Policy

2.26 Work is underway on production of a new Local Plan which is expected to be adopted by the end of 2024. The current Wokingham Local Plan is a collection of planning documents which includes the Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. This contains the following relevant policies relating to archaeology:

CP3 - General Principles for development

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life;*
- b) Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme;*
- c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.*
- d) Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species;*
- e) Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses;*
- f) Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping;*
- g) Provide for a framework of open space in secure community use achieving at least 4.65 ha/1,000 population provision together with recreational/sporting facilities in addition to private amenity space;*
- h) Contribute towards the provision of an appropriate sustainable network of community facilities;*
- i) Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land; and*

- j) *Do not lead to a loss of community or recreational facilities/land or infrastructure unless suitable alternative provision is available. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to the above criteria through the submission of Design and Access Statements, clear and informative plans, elevations and streetscenes and where required Masterplans, Development Briefs, Concept Statements and Design Codes.*

Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

1. *Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.*
2. *The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:*
 - a. *Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.*
 - b. *Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.*
3. *Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.*

Policy TB25: Archaeology

1. *Areas of high archaeological potential are shown on the Policies Map.*
2. *In areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains.*
3. *Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.*

Guidance

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015)

- 2.27 The purpose of this document is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and NPPG. It outlines a 6-stage process to the assembly and analysis of relevant information relating to heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development.
- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
 - Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
 - Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change;

- Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017)

- 2.28 Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.
- 2.29 The document restates the definition of setting as outlined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context; while it is largely a visual term, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors. The document makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor is it a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.30 The Good Practice Advice Note sets out a 5-stage process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting:
1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
 2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
 3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
 4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
 5. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The study site is not located in an Area of High Archaeological Potential as defined on the Wokingham Local Plan Proposals Map.
- 3.2 The Berkshire Historic Environment Record (BHER) records the following finds or features either bounding or within the study site:
- The BHER records the site of a Royal Observer Corps Monitoring Point (MRM17602 on Figure 2); and
 - The remains of an Iron Age settlement revealed during archaeological evaluation (including ditches, postholes, rectilinear enclosure and settlement) (MRM18278 on Figure 2).
- 3.3 The Berkshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) survey records the site as an Agricultural Landscape with Medium to Large Geometric Field Units. The landscape character also contains a gently undulating river terrace landform interspersed with ancient woodland and copses.
- 3.4 The majority of the proposed development has been subject to a geophysical survey undertaken by Sumo in May 2022 (Appendix 1).

Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 3.5 The BHER records three archaeological events within the study site; all of these are associated with the proposed Arborfield Cross Relief Road, the line of which runs through the south and south-west of the site. The event records are as follows:
- *Arborfield Cross Relief Road: Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment* (WSP 2016) (ERM2061 on Figure 4). This report identified that there is potential for archaeological remains from the prehistoric period through to the Post-Medieval period. It is likely that most areas have been disturbed, mainly from agricultural and horticultural activity during the 19th and 20th centuries; the depth of this disturbance and any potential archaeological remains are unknown. The potential for previously unrecorded archaeology to be present throughout the area remains;
 - *Arborfield Cross, Berkshire: Archaeological GI Monitoring Report Survey* (AOC Archaeology 2016) (ERM2062 on Figure 4). This investigation did not identify clear archaeological remains in any of the trenches. Although some trenches, particularly TP111-TP116, did appear to contain different soils within the topsoil and subsoil levels, which might be a sign of previous activity; and
 - *Arborfield Cross, Berkshire: Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (AOC Archaeology 2016) (ERM2063 on Figure 4). This investigation identified no anomalies of definitive archaeological origin but detected some areas possibly relating to archaeological activity. Discrete and tentative archaeological trends are noted in many areas, and a number of field boundaries identified.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets (Figure 2)

Prehistoric

- 3.6 The site contains no known designated or non-designated heritage assets relating to the prehistoric period, except for the recorded remains of an Iron Age settlement in the south west of the site (MWK18278 on Figure 2).

- 3.7 Most of the evidence for the Palaeolithic occupation in Berkshire is relatively limited in comparison to later periods. It is assumed that these late and post-glacial hunter gatherer communities occupied the river valleys on a seasonal basis, building temporary structures. These hunter gatherers made simple stone implements especially from flint, giving up the herd hunting practices of the Palaeolithic times to develop semi-permanent settlements by the Mesolithic period (Solent Thames Archaeological Framework, 2005).
- 3.8 Within the study area multiple find spots (MWK15 161-165, 170-71, 173-174, 178-179, 181, 221, 15172 on Figure 2) have been identified relating to the prehistoric period. These features mainly relate to the Loddon Valley field walking survey (ERM349 on Figure 4). The survey identified a wide spread of struck flints and pottery dating from the Mesolithic up to the Medieval Period. The largest collection of flints (MWK6763 on Figure 2) was identified to the north-west of the site consisting of a small flint assemblage comprising 4 flakes and a microlith.
- 3.9 The introduction of early farming methods during the Neolithic period brought with it the development of an economy wholly or partly dependent on crop cultivation and the domestication of animals. Evidence of such activity can be seen at Horton, further to the north-east of the site, near Winsor, where Neolithic field systems are apparent in the landscape. Early clearance for cultivation could have had significant and possibly irreversible impacts on the landscape. Human activity, during this period, is perceived to have been mainly on the free draining sands and gravels found around the river valleys (HLC Wokingham, 2004).
- 3.10 During the Bronze Age, there were settlements further outside of the study area and to the east of the site, such as Bray on the Thames, where a round house and other post built structures were located in fields as enclosure boundaries, possibly the remains of a farmstead. Other representations of Bronze Age activity and occupation are evident in the distribution of ceremonial and funerary monuments, located within the study area. A Bronze Age cemetery was found to the west of the site at Arborfield Court. To the south of Arborfield Cross, in c. 1906, during the excavation of foundations for Arborfield Court, two Bronze Age urn burials were uncovered at a depth of 3 m (MWK1121 on Figure 2). Also, a Bronze Age scraper was found to the west of the site.
- 3.11 The Iron Age period is denoted by the spread of iron working, along with the introduction of several other new technologies to the British Isles from Continental Europe. The distribution of Iron Age settlements appears to have been sporadic, with locally distinct clusters of sites occurring on the lighter better drained soils along the river valleys, close to the River Loddon to the west and the River Thames further to the north.
- 3.12 The HER notes a number of sites (MWK15617, 15721 on Figure 2) and find spots (MWK15304, 15964 on Figure 2) dating to the Iron Age period, indicating activity within the study area, including a number of Iron Age sites to the south centred around Arborfield Garrison (MWK15617 on Figure 2). The remains of an Iron Age settlement are recorded within the south of the site (MWK18278 on Figure 2). To the west of Arborfield Garrison, the HER notes an Early/Middle Iron Age farmstead which was excavated during construction work for a house. The farmstead comprised a roundhouse ring gully, a large pit or well and two possible gullies (MWK15721 on Figure 2).

Romano-British

- 3.13 The site contains no known designated or non-designated heritage assets relating to the Roman period. Berkshire lay in the territory of the Atrebates tribe at the time of the Roman incursions (AD43). Links between the Atrebates and Rome are implied by the introduction of coins suggesting Roman influence. The eventual Romanisation of the region included the development of towns and road networks. This is shown by the number of Roman roads in the region, and with settlements such as Silchester (Calleva Atrebatum) the Roman town located in Hampshire.
- 3.14 Within the study area, the postulated Roman road south-east of Reading (MWK4818 on Figure 2) is shown on the HER to run on an approximate north-west/south-east alignment to the west of the site. Within the immediate environs of the site, to the north, there is possibly evidence of Romano-British activity (MWK15685 on Figure 2) shown on the HER as cropmarks located to the west of Hall Farm and within Roman pottery findspots (MWK15306, 15308, 15312 on Figure 2) found within the study area.
- 3.15 There is evidence for Roman villas on the well-drained river gravels of the Thames, at Cox Green near Bray further to the east of the site and Pangbourne to the north-west of the site, west of Reading. However, much of the geology of the site is London Clay which is not recognised for Romano-British settlement but more so for agricultural husbandry redolent of pasture land for possible outlying settlement activity, mainly field systems and possibly roads or track ways.

Early Medieval/Medieval

- 3.16 The site contains no known designated or non-designated heritage assets relating to the Early Medieval period. The extent to which Roman-British settlements continued into the Anglo-Saxon period remains unclear in Berkshire, and information on the political framework and structure in the immediate post-Roman period is scant until the 6th century.
- 3.17 The Saxons occupied the regions of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire in the 6th century, although by 750 they had been subsumed by Mercia. The Saxons settled along the Upper Thames gravels, for example at Wraysbury where there is much evidence for shifting Saxon settlements on the floodplain. There is also evidence for the manipulation and management of rivers during this period within the Thames Valley such as Bray and Cookham to the east of the site.
- 3.18 When the Danes arrived within the area which was now the Royal Borough in 870, they would have found Saxon towns established at Old Winsor and Cookham, and possibly a smaller settlement at White Waltham. Except for Old Winsor there is almost no archaeological evidence for other established Early Medieval sites (HLC Wokingham 2004). The sites are all located further to the east of the study site.
- 3.19 The earliest potential reference to Wokingham is around the 8th century at the time when a reference to Pope Constantine, was contained in the chartulary of the Abbey of Peterborough and written between AD 708 – 715, it referred to the existence of a monastery somewhere within the territory of the Saxon Wokings. This reference is not certain, however, and the author suggests the focus is as likely to be Woking as it is Wokingham. The first certain written reference dates post-Conquest when the settlement name is recorded, meaning ‘homestead of the family, or ‘followers of Wocca’. He was probably a Saxon lord who also farmed lands in Wokefield and Woking (British History Online, 2016).

- 3.20 There is clear evidence for a substantial rise in population in the Saxon period, aligned with rapid economic expansion which included the birth of towns. There is evidence for the formation of a market at Wokingham in late Saxon period. However, there is no mention in Domesday (1086) of Arborfield which would suggest that at this time Arborfield probably formed part of the Manor of Sonning, held by the Bishop of Salisbury. Reference to Arborfield was apparently made later, at the beginning of the 13th century within the Quarter and Pipe Rolls (British History Online, 2016).
- 3.21 The site contains no known designated or non-designated heritage assets relating to the Late Medieval period. Whilst the Domesday Survey of 1086 does not record Wokingham, a settlement grew during the Medieval period, when the Bishop of Salisbury founded a new town. He then gained permission to hold a market in there every Tuesday. Forty years later rights to hold a fair on St. Barnabas' Day and All Saints' Day were added (British History Online, 2016). From the 13th century, the courts of Windsor Forest were held at Wokingham and the town was granted the right to hold a market. The Bishop of Salisbury was largely responsible for the growth of the town during this period and set out roads and plots making them available for rent. During this period the area that is now called Arborfield is believed to have formed part of the Manor of Sonning, held by the Bishop of Salisbury and comprising the Manor of Arborfield, formally located to the southwest of Hall Farm, near the ruins of St. Bartholomew's Church. The Medieval Manor House is suggested to have been located further south on the site of the moated site at Arborfield Garrison (Thames Valley Archaeological Services. 2011).
- 3.22 A marked expansion in the 12th/13th centuries was followed by a sharp decline in the 14th century due to the outbreak of the Black Death, followed by a steady recovery in the 15th century. Obvious examples of monuments of this period include standing structures such as churches, including the Old Church of St. Bartholomew located to the north of the site (SM 1006975 [DBF80 on Figure 2]), Yew Tree Cottage (DRM2460), The Swan Public House (DRM2138 on Figure 2), The Old Post Office (DRM2225 on Figure 2) and a cattle shelter (DRM2471 on Figure 2) show an increase in structures during this later Medieval period.
- 3.23 The area encompassing Arborfield and Wokingham was part of Windsor Forest, although the "-feld" element of Arborfield suggests a largely open and cultivated landscape in the Saxon period. The original Medieval settlement at Arborfield, was probably located close to the 13th century St Bartholomew's church (MWK1307 on Figure 2) (a chapel of-ease to the mother-church at Sonning), and later shifted to its present location. The ruins of the church still stand; a new church (also named St Bartholomew's) was built nearer the new village of Arborfield in 1863 (MWK1308 on Figure 2).

Post-Medieval/Modern

- 3.24 The site contains a single known designated or non-designated heritage asset relating to the Post-Medieval/Modern period; the site of the Royal Observer Corps Monitoring Post (MRM17602 on Figure 2).
- 3.25 In 1589 after several generations of the Bullock Family's Lordship, Arborfield and the associated farm at Barkham was sold to Edmund Standen and in 1603 the Jacobean Manor House of Arborfield was built by Edward Standen. By the mid-18th century the manor house had been sold to the Reeves family and subsequently changed hands several times until the manor house was demolished in the 1950s (British History Online, 2016). Several moated sites are located throughout the area including the Manor House referred to above and Kenny's Farm moated site further to the west comprising a rectilinear enclosed bank and ditch with a house platform at the centre.

- 3.26 By the time of the publication of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1876 (Figure 5), the village of Arborfield Cross comprised many properties with associated small fields, a post office, a couple of public houses, and farms on the periphery. During the subsequent decades, Arborfield Cross moderately increased in size and to the south a Remount Depot was constructed next to the site of the former Medieval manor house, today the remains of a moated site (SM 1009886).
- 3.27 Beyond the village, settlement consisted mainly of dispersed farmsteads occupying the drier ground offered by the terrace, with a series of lanes running towards the river linking the farms to fields on the floodplain. Towards the north of the terrace there are large fields with straight boundaries characteristic of parliamentary enclosure of probable early 19th century date. Towards the south, many of the fields with small interspersed copses shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1876 (Figure 5), have wavy boundaries indicating earlier enclosure.
- 3.28 The quadrangular moat at Moor Copse near Kenny's Farm, Arborfield, reflects the Post-Medieval fashion of enhancing the status and appearance of manor and other large houses. There are traces of the parkland around Arborfield Hall, the late 17th century country house demolished in 1945. The landscape park at Swallowfield further to the south-west was laid out in the 18th century. Many of the early historic maps also show Wokingham as Oakingham (Speed 1610), suggestive of a Tudor and Victorian corruption of the name 'Woka' (British History Online, 2016).
- 3.29 The Modern period within the study area is evident through the growth of the nearby towns of Reading and Wokingham and the demand for commercial transport on the inland waterways which declined and finally ceased in the 1950s. Today this modern infrastructure is dominated by the growing road network, with the M4 to the north of the study area, as a prime example.
- 3.30 The main development during the Modern period concerned the construction of military buildings (MWK15724 on Figure 2) and the extension of Arborfield Remount Depot (MRM17490 on Figure 2), now Arborfield Garrison located to the south of the site. The land for the establishment of the Remount Depot was purchased in 1904, and in 1906 Moat House was built to house the military commanders. The Remount Depot was originally constructed at the beginning of the First World War.
- 3.31 The garrison was occupied for 100 years, a major military base until quite recently, and comprises a major built form to the south of the site. Arborfield Garrison was a British Army garrison established in 1911, supplying the military with horses for both operational and ceremonial purposes. The former garrison site is currently used as the Regimental Headquarters of the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and today is to be redeveloped as a residential extension of the settlement of Arborfield Cross over the next decade.

Map Regression

- 3.32 The 1876 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 5) shows the site comprising a number of fields demarcated by hedgerows. Duck's Nest Farm is situated along Eversley Road, to the east of the site. Chamberlain's Farm is located to the north of the site, off Swallowfield Road.
- 3.33 The Ordnance Survey Map of 1900 (Figure 6) shows the removal of several field boundaries, along with most of the hedges. A footpath bisects the centre of the site. Duck

Nest's Farm and Chamberlain's Farm are shown in greater detail, with outbuildings to the main farmhouse evident.

- 3.34 There is little change between the Ordnance Survey Map of 1900 (Figure 6) and the 1912/3 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 7), except for the removal of field boundaries. Arborfield Court is shown to the west of the site.
- 3.35 There is no change between the 1912/3 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 7), and the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1938 (Figure 8) and 1961 (Figure 9).
- 3.36 On the 1971/6 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 10) modern housing development is shown bounding the north-east of the site.
- 3.37 There is no change between the 1971/6 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 10), and the 1990 (Figure 11), 2006 (Figure 12), 2018 (Figure 13) Ordnance Survey Maps.

Geophysical Survey

- 3.38 Sumo undertook a geophysical survey of most of the site (Appendix 1). The survey did not record any magnetic responses that could be interpreted as being of definite archaeological interest. Uncertain trends have been plotted and while the majority of them are likely to be due to agricultural processes, a circular response in Area 4 could be a ring ditch. A bike track is visible in Area 3 along with land drains. The route of a service pipe has been marked. Three zones of magnetic disturbance have been detected in the survey which are due to made ground and/or the spreading of green waste.

Past impacts, summary of identified / potential archaeological assets and statement of significance

- 3.39 The available evidence has been assessed to determine the nature and extent of any previous impacts upon any potential below ground archaeological deposits, which may survive within the bounds of the site.
- 3.40 Considering the results of previous archaeological investigations within the site and a review of known archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of it, the estimated potential for finds and features within the site is as follows:
- Low potential for prehistoric occupation across the site. The BHER does not record any finds/features of archaeological origin within the site. The evidence found through the field walking of Loddon (within the study area) (ERM349 on Figure 4) identified the potential for prehistoric material; it also indicates there is some potential for prehistoric material to exist within the site, most likely pertaining to worked flint.
 - The irregular and enclosed field systems and narrow tracks and lanes within the site and study area are interspersed with potential earlier settlement activity, including Iron Age settlement and industrial activity to the south, and Bronze Age potential occupation (cemetery) activity to the east. Evidence for Iron Age settlement (MWK18278 on Figure 2) within the site may yield information associated with its construction and occupation. However, the geophysical survey did not record any anomalies of archaeological origin and consequently, the site is considered to have low potential for prehistoric and Roman remains.
 - The archaeological interest of the study area surrounding Arborfield Cross focuses on evidence of the Medieval and Post-Medieval landscape and the development of the local agricultural settlements into larger villages and towns. The evidence of late

Medieval and Post-Medieval occupation is shown within the surrounding historic landscape character, indicative of the numerous moated sites, 'close' farmsteads and the ruined Medieval and Post-Medieval Church of St Bartholomew. This is further highlighted within the Post-Medieval landscape character of the surrounding area. However, the study site is in the agricultural hinterland of this known historic settlement. The geophysical survey failed to record any anomalies of archaeological origin. As such, the potential for significant Medieval or Post-Medieval finds/features within the site is low.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.41 This section will consider the potential effects of development within the study site on the significance of designated heritage assets, including through effects to their settings. This will include heritage assets within the study site, and those in the surrounding area, whose setting may be affected.
- 3.42 Heritage assets and potential impacts will be assessed using best practice, including that set out in Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets. The heritage assets which require assessment have been selected with reference to the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) database held by Historic England, as well as information held by the LPA on conservation areas.
- 3.43 A basic search radius was used to establish which heritage assets required assessment for impacts, which is usually sufficient to ensure all assets which require consideration are properly assessed. In some limited cases some heritage assets can have a wider setting which is sensitive, therefore the wider area outside of the search radius was also considered in the preparation of this assessment, to determine if additional highly graded heritage assets required inclusion in this assessment. No additional heritage assets were identified in this instance.
- 3.44 Not all designated heritage assets within this radius will require full assessment for impacts on an individual basis; where a designated heritage asset has been excluded, a clear justification will be provided, for example if the asset is sufficiently far, and well screened from the study area. Also, not all assets will require the same level of assessment. As set out in paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the level of detail will be sufficient to inform the nature and degree of effect of development within the study area on the significance of the heritage asset in question.
- 3.45 The distribution of designated heritage assets in relation to the study area can be found in Figure 3. The majority of the listed buildings within the study area are located within the built-up area of Arborfield Cross and are separated from the study site by the built area of the village. Consequently, the proposed development can have no effect of these designated assets and so they have not been assessed. There are five listed buildings within 1km radius that are not within the built area of Arborfield Cross all of which are located 500m -1km away from the developable area of the site and the site lies beyond their setting. These are Bartletts Farmhouse (grade II* NHLE1319119); White's Farmhouse (grade II NHLE1118124); Yew Tree Cottage (grade II NHL1319120); Chamberlain's Farm (grade II NHLE1118122) & Applemore (grade II NHLE1319118). These assets will not be assessed.
- 3.46 There are 2 listed buildings which are in proximity of the site and that have the theoretical potential to have their settings and significance impacted upon by development of the site. These are as follows:
- Arborfield Court (grade II) located to the north-west of the site (NHLE118123)
 - Duck's Nest Farmhouse (Grade II listed) located to the east of the site (HNLLE 1312999)

3.47 These listed buildings will be discussed individually in section 4 below.

3.48 There is one scheduled monument in the study area. This is Moated site north of the Moat House located 700m to the south-east of the study site (NHLE 1009886). The study site is considered to be beyond the setting of the scheduled monument. It is separated from the study site by the former Arborfield Garrison housing which blocks all intervisibility between the monument and the study site. There is no evidence for any historic ownership connections between the study site and the moated site. Consequently, the proposed development will have no effect on the significance of the scheduled monument.

4.0 Historic Environment Constraints and Recommendations

Site Conditions

- 4.1 The study site is bound by the A327 Everley Road to the west and south-west; Arborfield Court lies to the north-west; fields are located to the north; and Observer Way bounds the west and south-west (Figure 1).
- 4.2 The site is undulating, with a ridge which runs south-west to north-east across the northern part of the site at c. 80 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The land slopes to the north-west and south-east from the ridge down to c. 65 m AOD in the north-western and south-eastern corners of the site.
- 4.3 The site primarily comprises grass fields demarcated by hedges, with an arable field located in the north.

The Proposed Development

- 4.4 The proposed development consists of a hybrid application comprising:
- a) A full application for the change of use of land from agricultural land to provide an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), including the details of associated landscaping, planting, drainage measures, parking, walking routes and other works associated with the creation of the SANG.
 - b) An outline application with all matters reserved other than access into the site for a residential development of up to 135 dwellings, open space, internal accesses and parking, drainage measures, landscaping and all other associated works."

Potential Non-Designated Archaeological Heritage Assets

- 4.5 The site is considered to have low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. The geophysical survey of the site failed to reveal any anomalies that could be interpreted as being of archaeological origin. Geophysical survey does not always record all archaeological features present so there is the potential for as yet unreported remains. However, should such remains be present they are considered to be of no more than local significance and are not a design or planning constraint.
- 4.6 Should further archaeological works be required, these can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.

Designated Heritage Assets

Arborfield Court (Grade II listed) (NHLE 118123)

- 4.7 Arborfield Court a former large country house that has been divided into two residential units. It was constructed in 1904 to a design by Fairfax B. Wade, in a free William and Mary style, and using red brick. The listing describes the house as follows:

Large country house, now divided in 2 units. 1904 by Fairfax B. Wade, in a free William and Mary style. Red brick with orange dressings; rendered panels between head and cills of windows; tile hipped roof with extended brick end stacks. 2 storeys and attics. Plinth, giant pilaster panels, wood modillion eaves cornice and 6 dormers the outer pairs hipped, central pair flat headed. Entrance front: 3 central bays project with further projection in central bay which includes pediment gabled stair tower; central bay panelled through 3 storeys with recessed dressed arch above triple keystone. 2 storey octagonal wood oriel with rendered panels between first and attic floors. 9 bays, cross casements in outer 3 bays on

each side six light casements flanking central bays. All leaded. Recessed arched entrance with large recessed open segmental pediment, infilled at sides and panelled. Panelled double doors, latticed over light and sidelights; brick centre supporting pediment. The whole flanked on either side by small one storey projecting pavillions. Garden front in similar style with projecting wings. Interior:- return staircase in panelled well with barley sugar balusters. B.O.E. (Berks) p.66. V.C.H. Vol.III p.202.

- 4.8 The proximity of Arborfield Court to the village created a link between the old settlement north of Church Lane to the expanded village to the east of Arborfield Court. The residential property was originally built within enclosed grounds offering privacy and seclusion and was set back from the road to Arborfield; it still today retains its secluded and tranquil setting.
- 4.9 The immediate setting of the asset is relatively tranquil. It is well set back from Swallowfield Road, and is screened by tall, mature trees and hedging. There are limited views from the building into the site from the east. The setting of the building makes a positive contribution to its significance.
- 4.10 The built-up area of the proposed development is located away from Arborfield Court. The SANG is located in between the residential area of the development and the listed building. This will ensure that there will be a large buffer area of open space to the south of Arborfield Court and consequently, there will be no effect on the significance of Arborfield Court.

Duck's Nest Farmhouse (Grade II listed) (NHLE 1312999)

- 4.11 Duck's Nest Farmhouse is located on the south-western edge of Arborfield Cross village, adjacent to the busy A327 Eversley Road, and Arborfield roundabout. The building dates to the late 18th century, with later alterations and is now used for both commercial and residential purposes. The A327, which was formerly the main route from Arborfield to the south, provides an intrusion to the immediate setting of the building. The listing describes the house as follows:

Farmhouse. C18, altered C20. Brick; hipped old tile roof. Rectangular plan. 2 storeys. Chimney with offset head to right of centre on ridge. North front:- flush vitreous brick string at first floor level. Originally 5 upper windows, second from right now blocked. One 3-light leaded casement, others 2-light C20 casements. 3 windows on ground floor, the 2 right hand C19 2-light casements with small panes, the one on left a 2-light C20 casement. Door in C19 rustic porch second bay from left.

- 4.12 The significance of the house lies in its relatively early vernacular architectural and historic interest. The main elevation faces north-west toward associated former agricultural buildings and barns. It is located at the north end of a large garden with high hedged boundaries. It is separated from the study site by a complex of modern buildings. These buildings have severed the former link between Duck's Nest Farm and the study site. Consequently, the study site has a neutral contribution to the significance of the farmhouse.
- 4.13 The listed farmhouse will be separated from the proposed development by the modern buildings to the west, north-west and south-west of the farmhouse and by the former agricultural buildings to the north. There are potential views of the development to the south but hedge along the garden boundary is tall and will screen such views. The boundary of the study site will be planted which will further reduce/remove intervisibility with the development from the farmhouse. Furthermore, the provision of a SUDS basin in the area closest to the farmhouse in the south-eastern area of the site next to the existing entrance to the modern buildings off Eversley Road, will mean that the built form of the

development will also be shielded by the modern buildings to the rear of the listed farmhouse. Consequently, the development will not be experienced from the listed building. This, combined with the neutral contribution to the significance of Duck's Nest Farm that the site currently has, means that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the significance of Duck's Nest Farm.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 This heritage desk-based assessment considers land at Duck's Nest Farm, Arborfield, Berkshire (Figure 1).
- 5.2 The site is considered to have low potential for archaeological remains of all periods. The geophysical survey of the site failed to reveal any anomalies that could be interpreted as being of archaeological origin. Geophysical survey does not always record all archaeological features present so there is the potential for as yet unreported remains. However, should such remains be present they are considered to be of no more than local significance and are not a design or planning constraint.
- 5.3 Should further archaeological works be required, these can be secured by an appropriately worded condition.
- 5.1 The study site is considered to lie beyond the setting of all designated heritage assets within the wider area except for Duck's Nest farm (grade II) and therefore have no effect on these assets. Ducks Nest Farmhouse will be separated from the proposed development by the modern buildings to the west, north-west and south-west of the farmhouse and by the former agricultural buildings to the north. There are potential views of the development to the south but hedge along the garden boundary is tall and will screen such views. The boundary of the study site will be planted which will further reduce/remove intervisibility with the development from the farmhouse. Furthermore, the provision of a SUDS basin in the area closest to the farmhouse in the south-eastern area of the site next to the existing entrance to the modern buildings off Eversley Road, will mean that the built form of the development will also be shielded by the modern buildings to the rear of the listed farmhouse. Consequently, the development will not be experienced from the listed building. This, combined with the neutral contribution to the significance of Duck's Nest Farm that the site currently has, means that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the significance of Ducks Nest Farm.

Sources

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Berkshire Record Office (HRO);
The British Library (BL);
The National Archives (TNA)

Websites

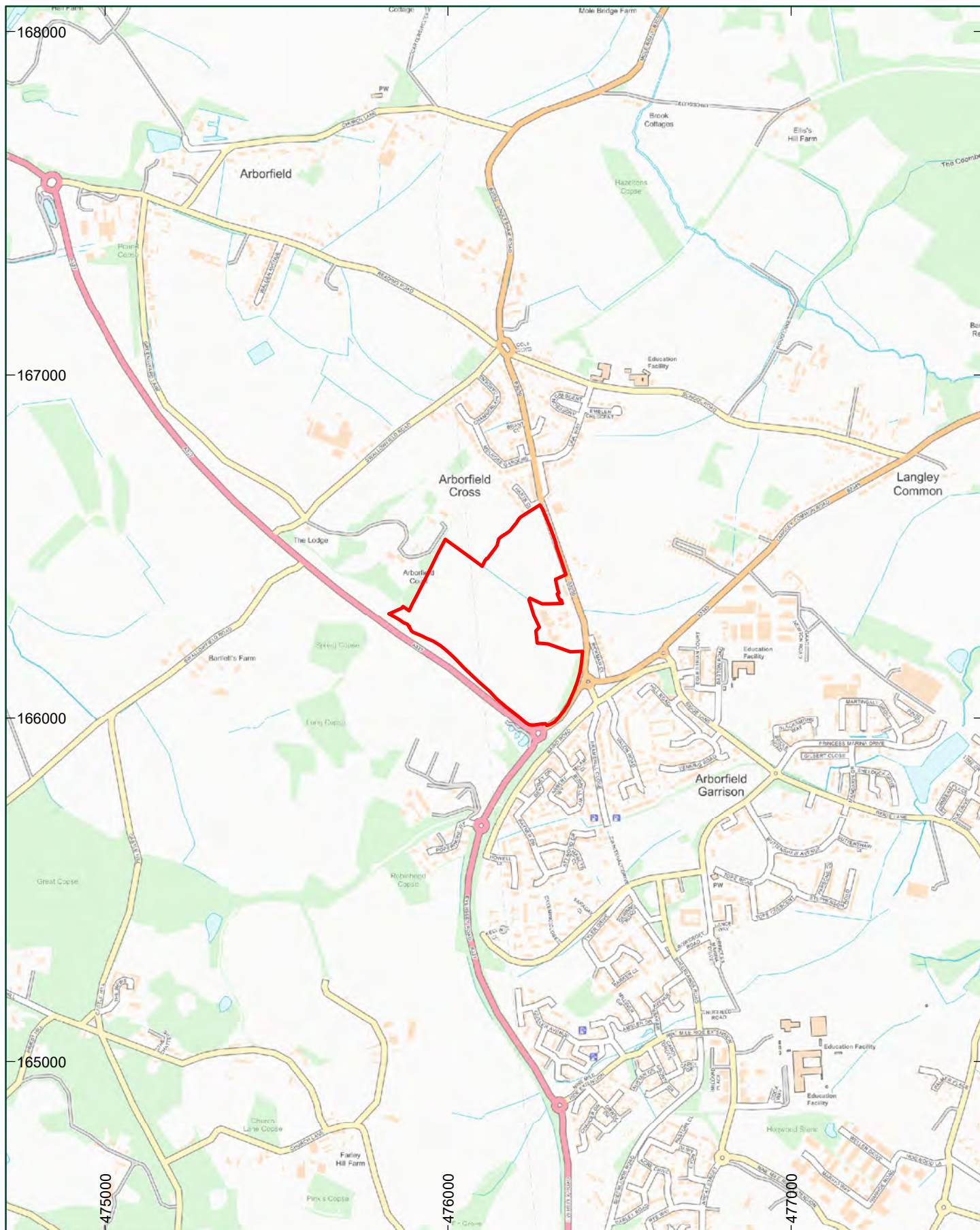
Archaeological Data Service – www.ads.ahds.ac.uk
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Heritage Gateway – www.heritagegateway.org.uk
MAGIC – www.magic.gov.uk
Pastscape – www.pastscape.org.uk
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Cartographic / Archival Material

1876 OS 1:10,560 Scale Map
1900 OS 1:10,560 Scale Map
1912/3 OS 1:10,560 Scale Map
1938 OS 1:10,000 Scale Map
1961 OS 1:10,000 Scale Map
1971/6 OS 1:10,000 Scale Map
1990 OS 1:10,000 Scale Map
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Legend



Site Boundary

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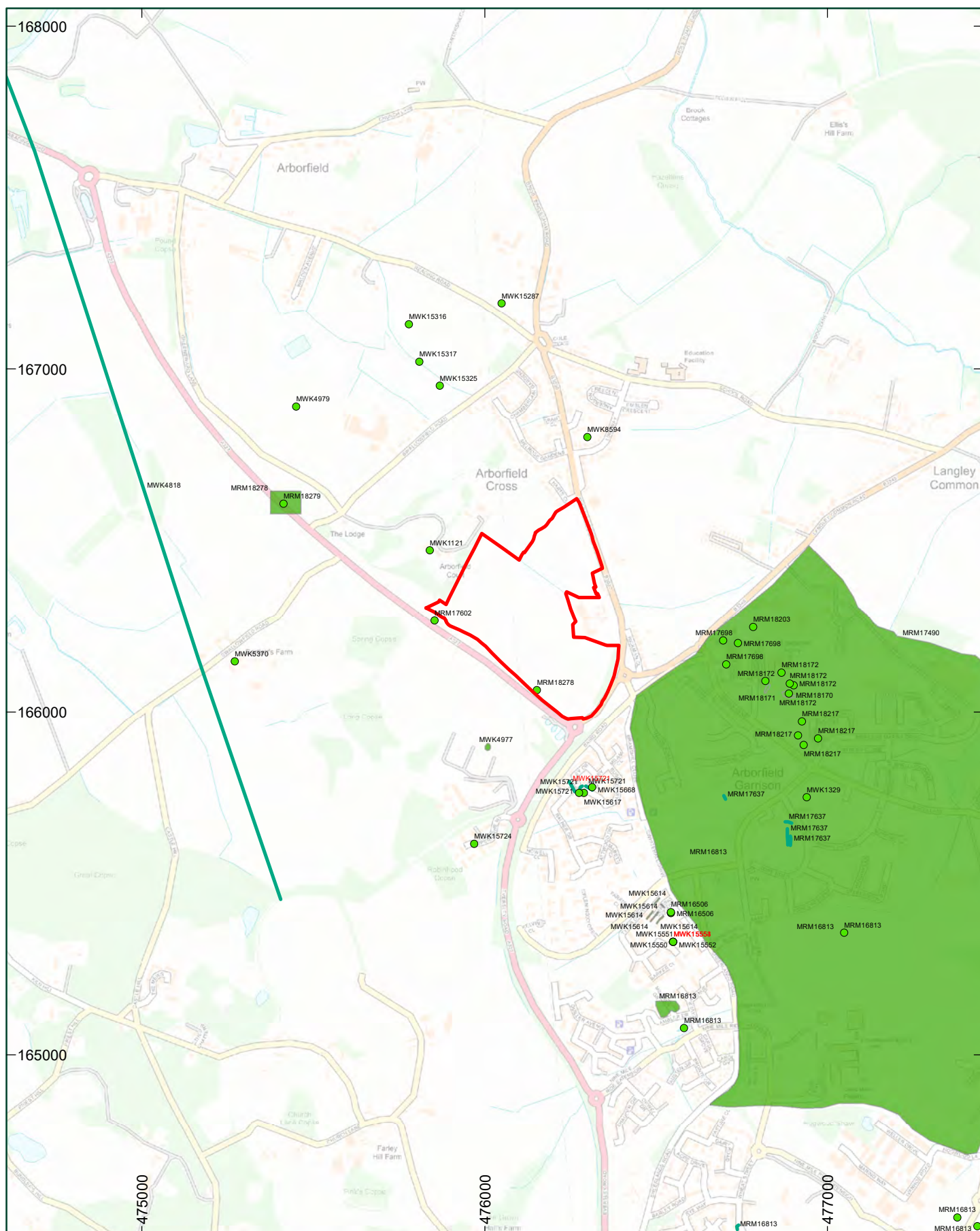
Figure 1: Site Location

Address:

Arborfield Cross



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- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Monument and findspot point
 - Monument and findspot line
 - Monument and findspot region

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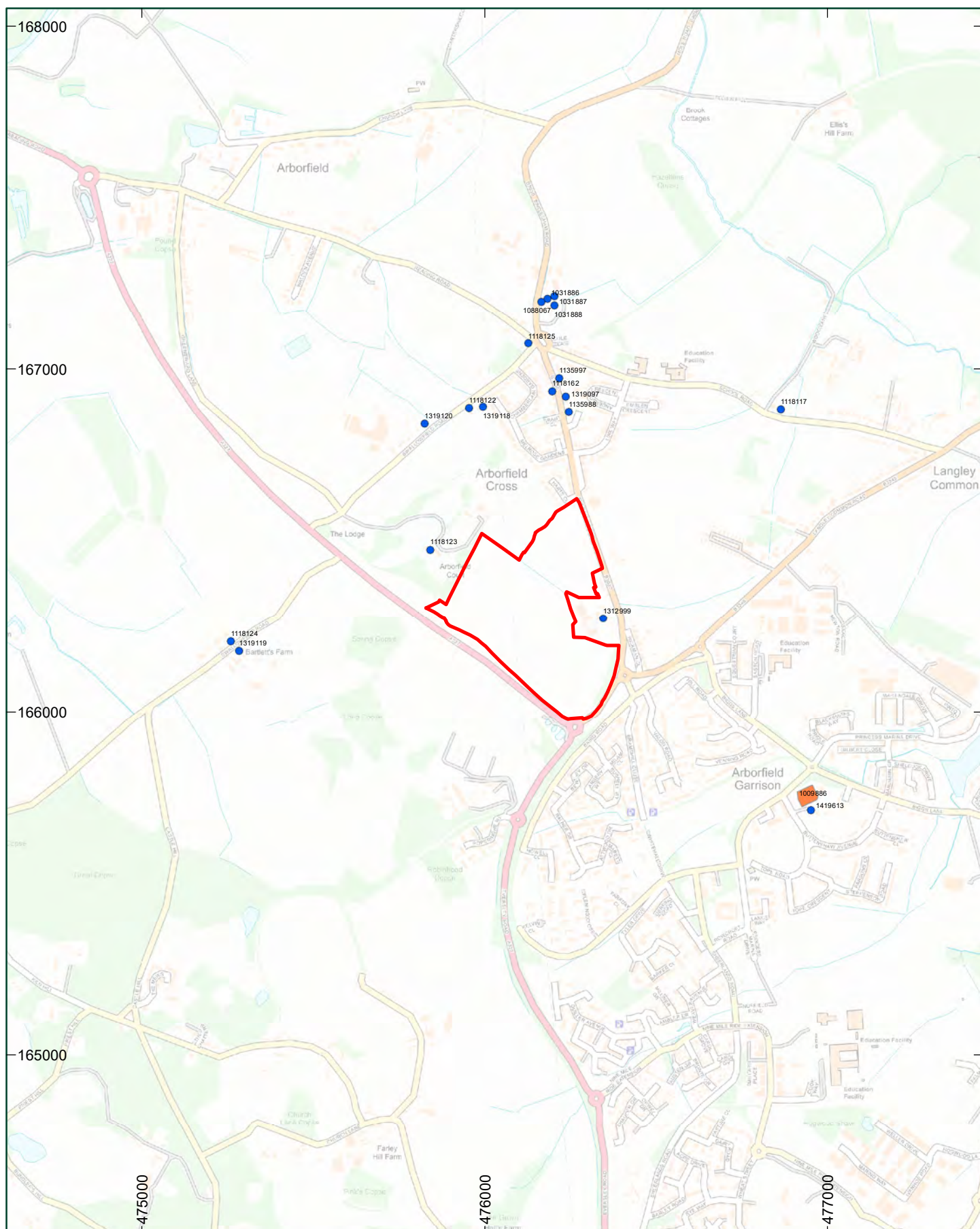
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Figure 2: HER Plot - Monuments

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Arborfield Cross



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- Site Boundary
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed building

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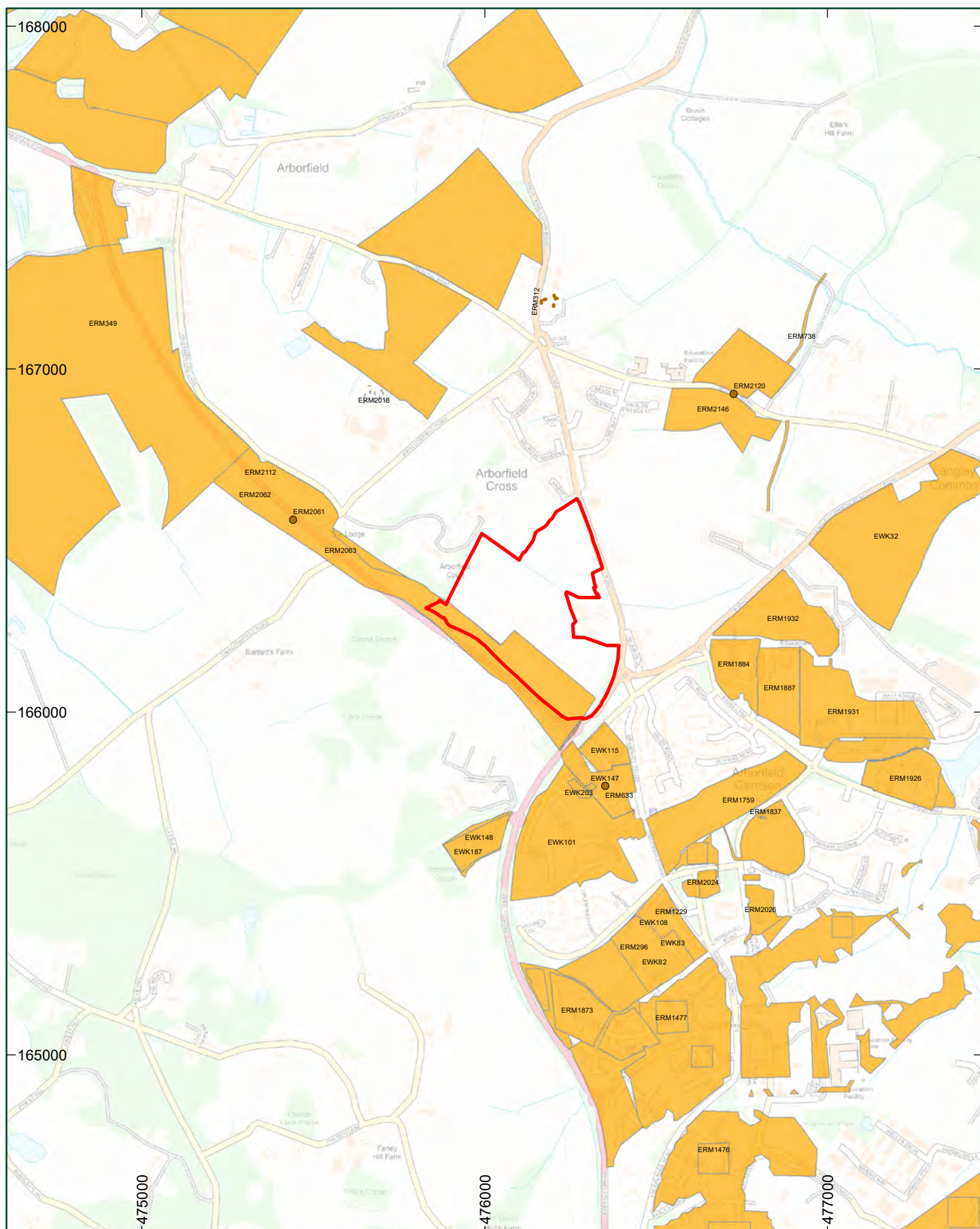
Figure 3: HER Plot - Designated Heritage Assets

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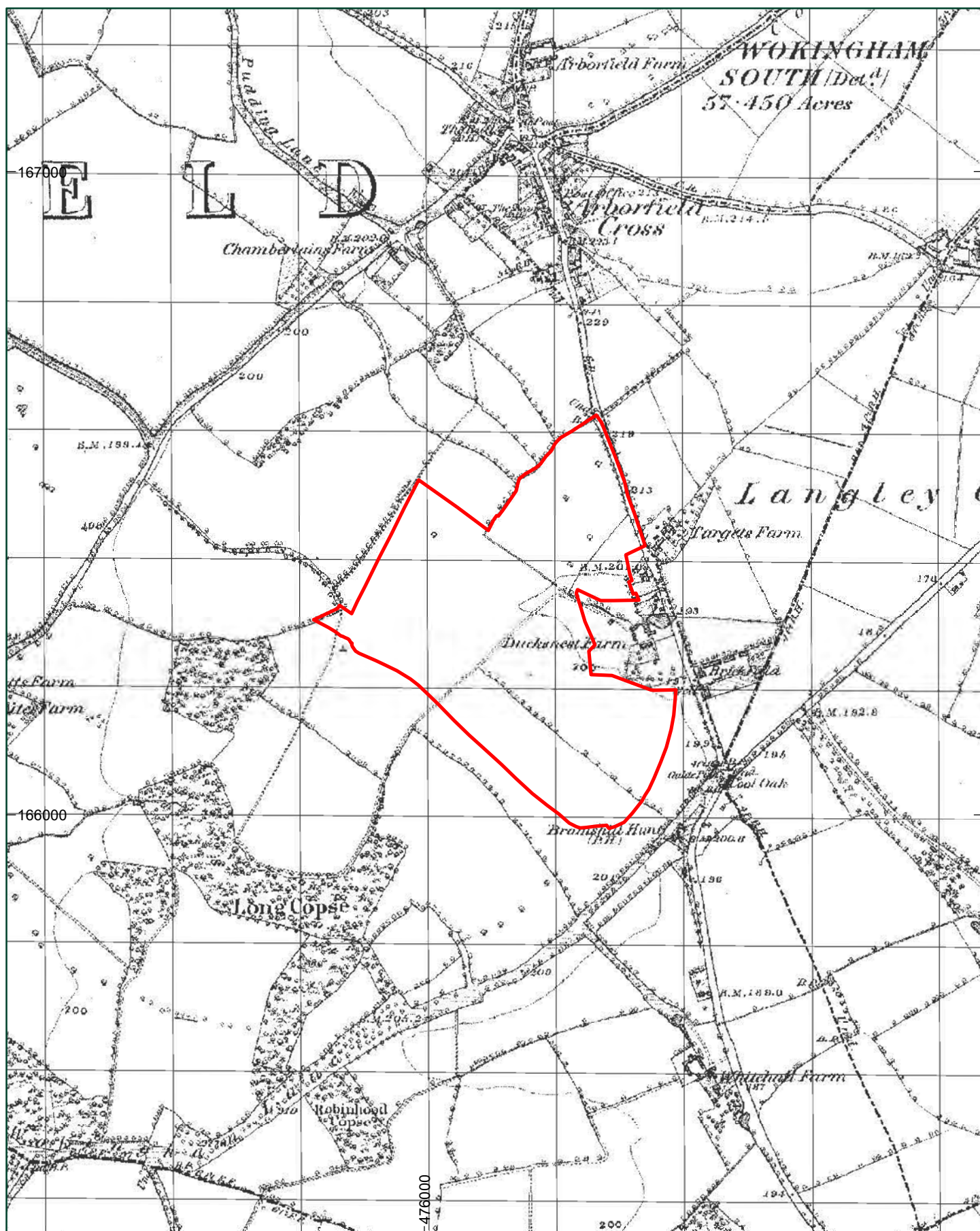
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Site Boundary

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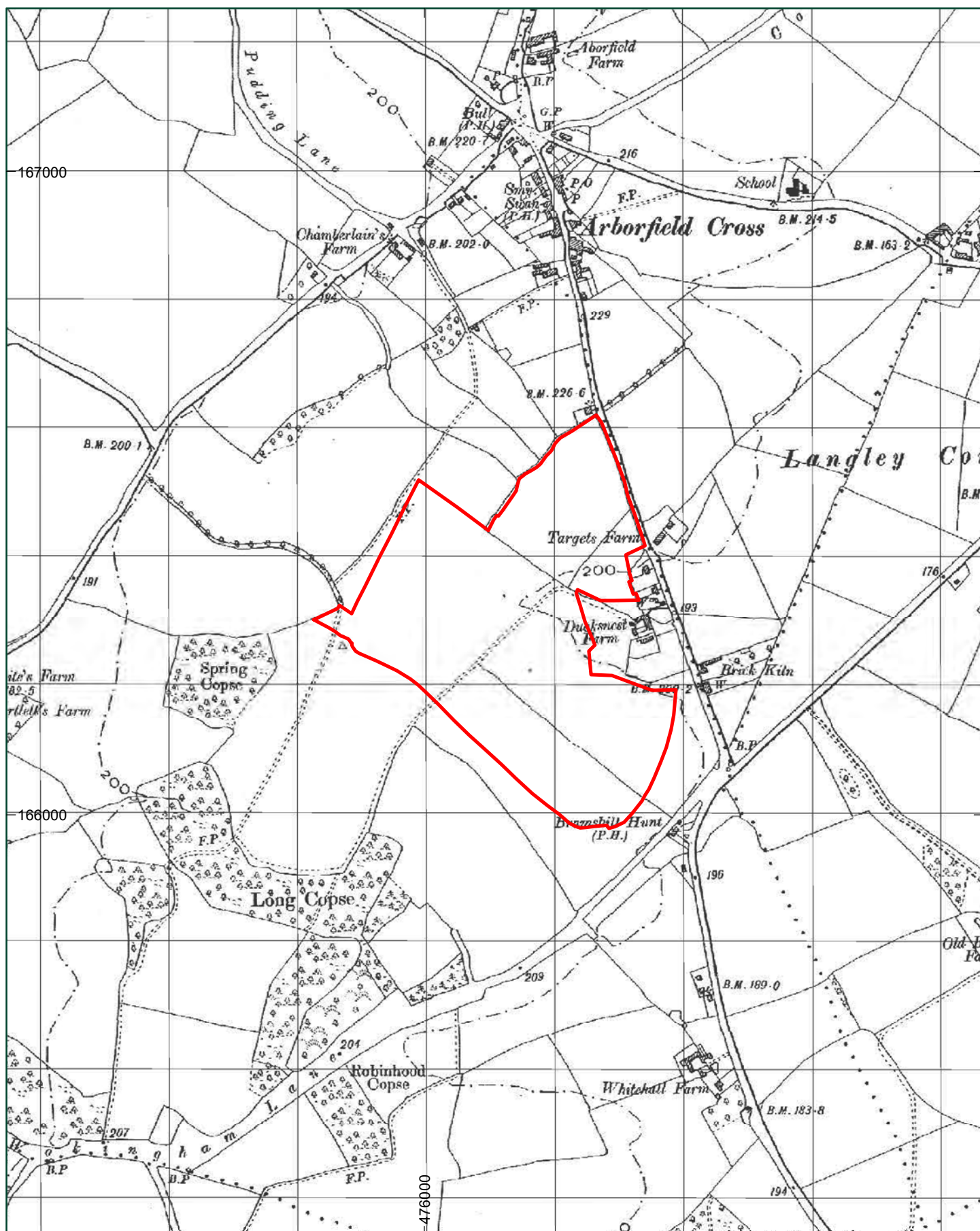
Figure 5: 1876 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Map

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Arborfield Cross



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Site Boundary

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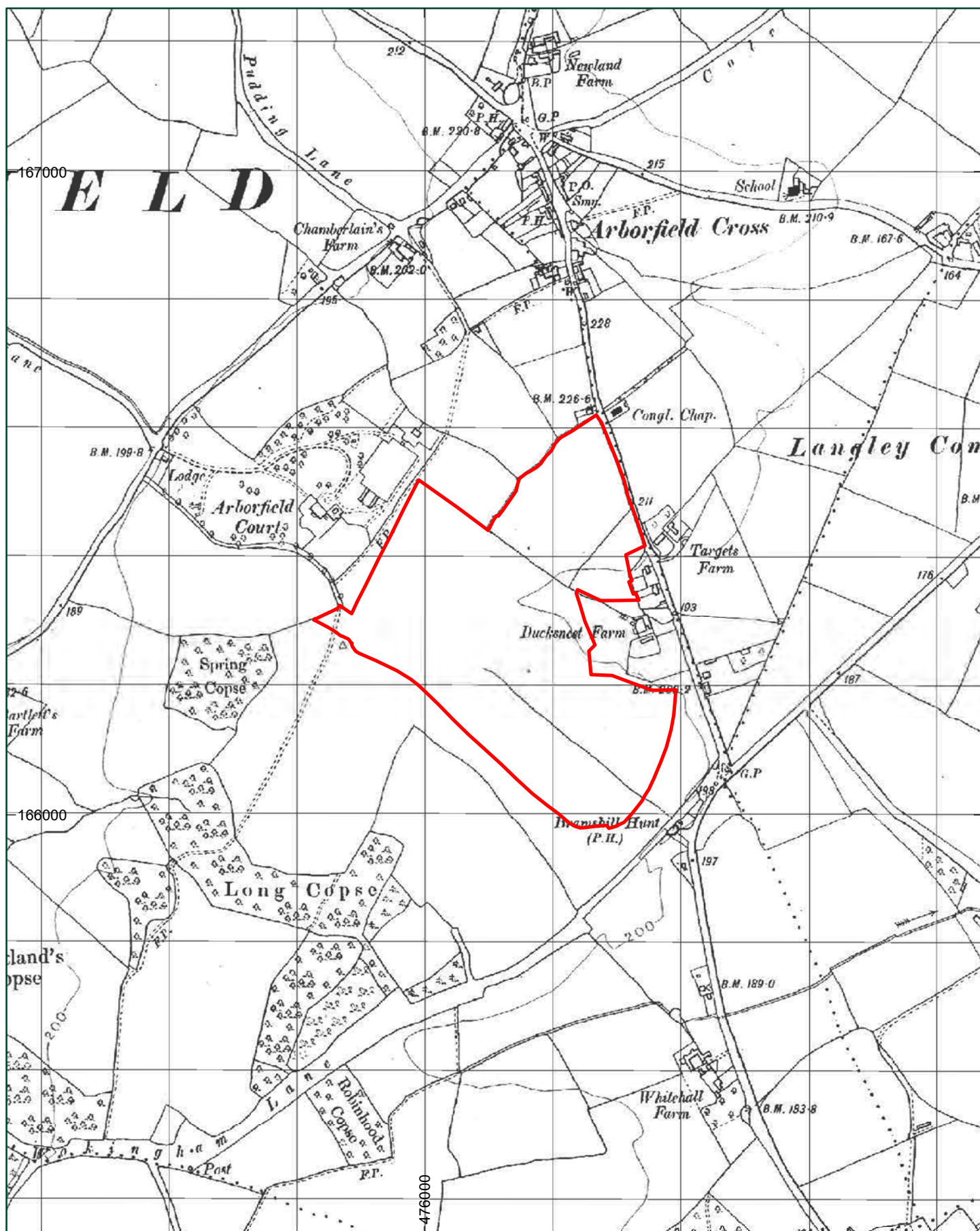
Figure 6: 1900 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Map

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Site Boundary

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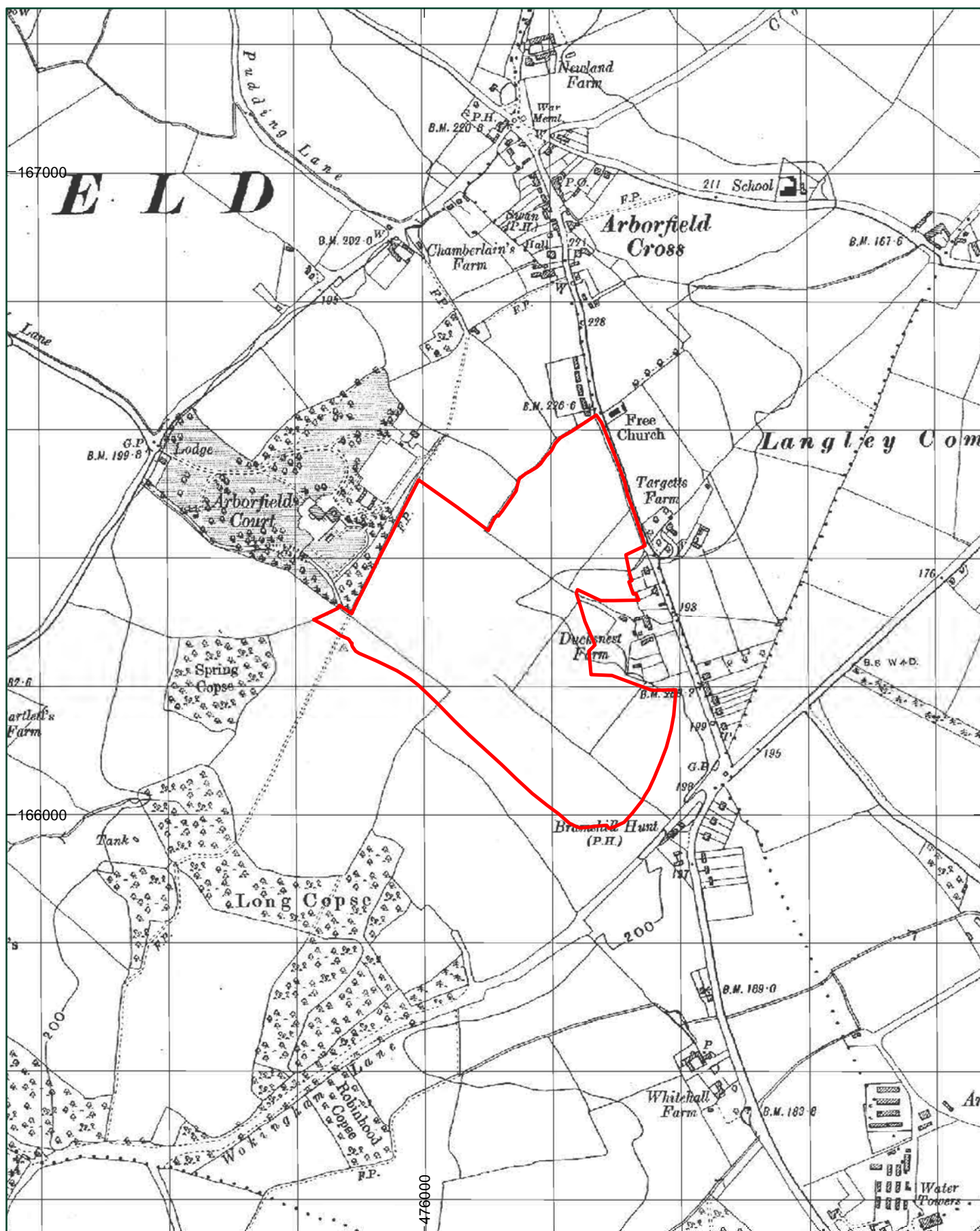
Figure 7: 1912/3 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Map

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Arborfield Cross



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Site Boundary

1:8,000 at A4

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Title:

Figure 8: 1938 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Map

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Arborfield Cross



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